

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims. Currently, claims 1-46 remain pending in the current application, including independent claims 1, 27, and 37.

In the Office Action, claims 37-38, and 41-46 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Specifically, the Office Action states that the term “reduced Poisson ratio” is a comparative term and that the basis of comparison is unclear. Applicants respectfully submit that claim 37, as amended, is clear as to what the reduced Poisson ratio is referring to.

In the Office Action, claims 1-46 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,027,483 of Chappell, et al. in combination with JP-A 10 134102 (JP '102) and in further combination with U.S. Patent No. 6,458,447 of Cabell, et al. However, Applicants respectfully submit that no motivation exists to combine the cited references as attempted by the Office Action.

First, no motivation exists to combine Chappell, et al. with JP '102. Chappell, et al. is generally directed to a web material which exhibits an elastic-like behavior along at least one axis when subjected to an applied and subsequently released elongation. The web material includes a network having at least two visually distinct and dissimilar regions comprised of the same material compositions. The first region is oriented substantially parallel to an axis of elongation such that it will undergo a molecular level deformation in response to an applied axial elongation in a direction substantially parallel to the axis before a substantial portion of the second region undergoes any substantial molecular level deformation. Col. 3, lines 5-13. The second region is comprised of a plurality of raised rib-like elements, which refers to an embossment, debossment, or combination thereof. Col. 3, lines 23-25. The rib-like elements allow the second region to undergo a substantially geometric deformation which results in significantly less restrictive forces to an applied elongation than that exhibited by the molecular level deformation of the first region. Col. 3, lines 38-43.

As pointed out by the Office action, in one embodiment, the web material exhibits a Poisson lateral contraction affect less than about 0.4 at 20% elongation as measured

perpendicular to the axis of elongation. Col. 4, lines 64-67. However, as explained above, this affect is achieved by two dissimilar regions comprised of the same material compositions, through embossed rib-like elements. In fact, Chappell, et al. completely fails to teach or suggest that a Poisson lateral contraction can be reduced through the use of a bonding material applied to the web.

The Office Action attempts to combine the teachings of JP '102 in order to teach a bonding material applied to the first side of the tissue web in a pattern comprising a plurality of individual cells. However, Applicants respectfully submit that the application of any bonding material to the particularly embossed web having rib-like elements of Chappell, et al. would affect the movement of the "substantially geometric deformation" of the rib-like elements that occurs when elongation forces are applied to the web. Thus, if any bonding material were to be applied to the web of Chappell, et al., the movement of the embossed ribs-like elements would be affected. As such, one of ordinary skill in the art would not be motivated to apply any bonding material – in any pattern – to the web of Chappell, et al..

In any event, even if Chappell, et al. is combined with JP '102, absent any motivation or suggest to do so, no further motivation exists to further combine the teachings of Cabell, et al. Cabell, et al. is generally directed to a paper web comprising a plurality of first and second regions. The first regions form boundaries separating the second regions. The second regions are a plurality of raised out-of-plane rib-like elements. The first and second regions undergo geometric deformation when the web material is subjected to an applied elongation along at least one axis. See, Abstract.

However, Applicants respectfully submit Cabell, et al. does not disclose or suggest a pattern that imposes a reduced Poisson ratio in the width and length directions to the web, as required by pending independent claims 1, 27, and 37. To the contrary, the web of Cabell, et al. works directly with the Poisson laws in the length and width directions: "the first regions 60 contract in a direction generally perpendicular to the applied loading, in a two-dimensional, geometric manner generally in the plane of the paper web." Col. 8, ll. 59-62, emphasis added. Cabell, et al. goes on to state that this contraction is "analogous to a two dimensional Poisson effect." Col. 8, ll. 62-65.

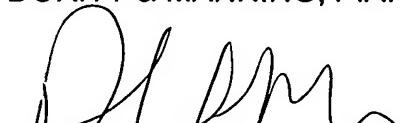
In fact, Cabell, et al. relies on the normal Poisson effect to increase bulk in response to extension in at least one direction, by relying on the normal contraction of the web in the perpendicular direction of the extension force. Col. 9, ll. 8-10. Applicants respectfully submit that Cabell, et al. fails to teach or suggest a pattern that results in a reduced Poisson ratio in the width and length directions. As such, Applicants respectfully submit that one of ordinary skill in the art would not be motivated to combine the teachings of Cabell, et al. to those of either Chappell, et al. or JP '102.

Applicants also respectfully submit that for at least the reasons indicated above relating to corresponding independent claims, the pending dependent claims patentably define over the references cited. However, Applicant also notes that the patentability of the dependent claims certainly does not hinge on the patentability of independent claims. In particular, it is believed that some or all of these claims may possess features that are independently patentable, regardless of the patentability of the independent claims.

Applicants also submit that the present application is in complete condition for allowance. Should any questions or issues remain, however, after consideration of this response, then Examiner Watkins is invited and encouraged to telephone the undersigned at his convenience.

Please charge any additional fees required by this response to Deposit Account No. 04-1403.

Respectfully submitted,
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